

A Testimony of the Power of Prayer in India's Elections –

An extract taken from:

Dawn Report: September 2004

God Responds to a Nation on its Knees

By Sheryl Wingerd

Their unity of mind was almost unheard of, their plan simple, their posture humble and their request enormous: "God, install a righteous government in our country!"

As national elections loomed, the Indian Church had much at stake. Churches were being increasingly persecuted and their liberties cut shorter and shorter. The leading party was determined to inhibit those freedoms even more.

In February, thirty Christian leaders came to a quickly assembled meeting where they made a plan to raise 100,000 intercessors in 100 days. They chose 2 Chronicles 7:14 as their starting place, to begin with repentance as a Church.

"Such a powerful thing happened," said Dr. Victor Choudhrie from Madhya Pradesh. "It snowballed." In the end, he estimates that five million Christians joined in the prayer and fasting for their nation. "Never in history have so many people been mobilized from this country to pray," he said.

Many prayer-walked around voting sites, some worked at election booths. "The Church all over the country prayed earnestly," said Joshua Pillai. "The climax in the city of Chennai was a chain fasting for 72 hours where all the top leaders and the Church were present."

Their prayers did not focus on particular candidates or particular parties. Their request, as printed and distributed in a small leaflet, was "that people would vote for a Government that is righteous and open to freedom of choice."

What happened was totally unexpected. The underdog party, also the one most concerned about religious freedom, won the election with a landslide victory. This was contrary to opinion polls taken throughout the voting period.

"The losers don't know how they lost and the winners don't know how they won," says Choudhrie. "People are saying, it was the X factor. No it was the prayer factor." Another leader said, "I mobilised a lot of prayer, but I didn't believe it could change governments!"

It has. Already, freedoms have been enhanced. "We can breathe again as Christians," said Choudhrie.

It has changed more than the government, however. It has changed the Church. Bennet Emmanuel, Editor of India's journal *Christian Manager*, says, "Just prior to the election process it was heartening to see Christians cutting across all denominational lines, assembling at common platforms to pray for the nation. The call for prayer was a nationwide response. It only underscores the power of unity and cooperation. If the Church gets her act together, God responds decisively."

The church in India has been awakened like never before to its obligation to the nation through prayer. Follow-up plans and meetings have already been initiated by the same Church leaders. Their conviction is to demonstrate their love, loyalty and commitment to their nation by earnestly and faithfully upholding their government and all its leaders in prayer.

Through this experience, as Emmanuel puts it, "...one unmistakable truth comes to the fore: that it is God who scripts the destiny of nations." - Distributed by Pstr Rasik Ranchord

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